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TO RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC

RUEAEPA/HQ EPA WASHINGTON DC

RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC

RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC

RUCPDC/NOAA NMFS WASHINGTON DC

RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 002550

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR OES/PCI, OES/EGC, SCA/INSB, EEB/ESC/IEC and EEB/TPP/BTA  
STATE FOR SECC TODD STERN

DEPT OF ENERGY FOR TCUTLER, CGILLESPIE, MGINNSBERG

TREASURY FOR DAS PIZER AND OFFICE OF SOUTH ASIA MNUGENT

USDOC FOR ITA/MAC/OSA/LDROKER/ASTERN/KRUDD

DEPT PASS TO USTR MDELANEY/CLILIENFELD/AADLER

TREASURY PASS TO FRB SAN FRANCISCO/TERESA CURRAN

USDA PASS FAS/OCRA/RADLER/BEAN/FERUS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENT MINISTER DEFENDS COPENHAGEN ACCORD; LOCAL NGOS VITRIOLIC

REF: NEW DELHI 2441

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Minister of Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh claimed victory for India's Copenhagen negotiating team in a parliamentary session December 22. Ramesh used his response to opposition attacks to sensitize the nation to the idea India needs to realize its responsibilities as an emerging power. Ramesh said India's emissions should peak no later than 2100, that it should not demand no-cost technology transfer but rather sell clean tech to the rest of the world, and that it had nothing to fear from international consultation and analysis of its domestic mitigation actions. While the GOI congratulates itself on the Copenhagen Accord, local NGOs are condemning it in the strongest possible terms. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Minister Ramesh, with Prime Minister Singh in attendance, defended the Copenhagen Accord in the upper house of India's parliament in a two and a half hour question and answer session December 22. He said India was "entirely successful" in its negotiation strategy as there was no dilution of either the Bali Action Plan or the Kyoto Protocol, India was not required to agree on a year in which its emissions would peak, and it avoided any legally binding emission commitments, including a long-term global goal of reducing emissions 50 percent by 2050. Ramesh stated the Copenhagen Accord was fully consistent with PM Singh's 2008 commitment that India's emissions would never exceed those of the developed world on a per capita basis and that "India's access to global atmospheric resources was not limited but assured."

¶3. (SBU) Ramesh was attacked by the opposition who stated the GOI had "been outwitted" by the developed world. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and left parliamentarians claimed the Copenhagen Accord derailed the Bali Action Plan, was an "implied abrogation" of the Kyoto Protocol, accepted the concept of peak emissions, left India off the priority list for climate finance and technology transfer, and put national sovereignty at risk over the issue of international scrutiny of unsupported domestic mitigation actions. BJP MP Arun Jaitley feared the Copenhagen Accord would subject the country to

international consequences if India falls short of its promised mitigation actions.

¶4. (SBU) Ramesh responded stating the Kyoto Protocol and Bali Action Plan were "sacrosanct" and would be the basis for all future climate negotiations. He said India had already accepted the concept of peak emissions, which was implied in PM Singh's 2008 per capita emissions commitment, and that not accepting a stated peak year was a major success. However, Ramesh cautioned that India had to realize its emissions must peak no later than 2100 to avoid damaging climate change. On finance, Ramesh gave his personal opinion that India doesn't want international aid and should stand on its own two feet. He backed off this statement immediately saying international assistance was needed but it was time India understood it was not in the same category as countries such as Bangladesh, Maldives, Grenada, or African nations. He made similar statements regarding technology transfer saying India should realize technology is bought and sold, not given away, and that India should be selling green technology to the world.

¶5. (SBU) Ramesh did concede India's agreeing to international consultation and analysis of domestic mitigation actions was a shift in policy but that he had signaled the possibility in his statement to the lower house of parliament December 3 (Reftel). He said the shift was necessary because the United States delegation had told the world there would be no financing without transparency and after that, representatives of Bangladesh and the Maldives approached him questioning India's stance against international scrutiny of domestic mitigation actions. He defended the shift stating the consultation and analysis provisions in the accord were similar to those found in the World Trade Organization and that India should not fear them as they would not be intrusive or erode national

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sovereignty.

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LOCAL NGOS NOT HAPPY  
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¶6. (U) The general feeling among Local NGOs is one of disappointment and anger at both the GOI and the Copenhagen Accord. The Bangalore based Centre for Social Markets likens the accord to the 1938 Munich Pact claiming it appeases major emitting nations, condemns the world to runaway climate change, and is a declaration of war on our children. The New Delhi based Centre for Science and the Environment accuses the GOI of buckling under Western pressure and claims the Copenhagen Accord forgives developed countries for their historical responsibility, eliminates the distinction between developed and developing countries, prevents effective action to curb global warming, and fatally undermine efforts to renew the Kyoto Protocol saying the accord will be disastrous for the climate and for India's most vulnerable communities.

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COMMENT  
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¶7. (SBU) The most telling aspect of Ramesh's performance in parliament was what appeared to be a concerted action to nudge the country toward eventual acceptance of the greater responsibilities of an emerging power in the context of the climate negotiations. He deftly handled the issue of peaking emissions, clearly stated India was not in the same category as other developing countries, and with Prime Minister Singh sitting silently six feet away, stated India did not need to demand technology transfer at low or no cost. This marks a substantial change in India's climate position and takes it further from the G-77. With Special Envoy for Climate Change Shyam Saran rumored to be retiring within a month, Ramesh will be left firmly in the driver's seat with a host of progressive ideas on the road to Mexico City.

ROEMER